

Envisioning Futures for the Delta



ENVISIONING FUTURES FOR THE SACRAMENTO–SAN JOAQUIN DELTA

JAY LUND | ELLEN HANAK | WILLIAM FLEENOR
RICHARD HOWITT | JEFFREY MOUNT | PETER MOYLE

Public Policy Institute of California

Engineers:

Jay Lund, UC Davis*

William Fleenor, UC Davis

Economists:

Ellen Hanak, PPIC*

Richard Howitt, UC Davis

Geologist:

Jeffrey Mount, UC Davis

Biologist:

Peter Moyle, UC Davis

* *Lead authors*

Delta Ideas: Old and New

Old Idea	New Idea
1. The Delta is unchanging.	Sea level rise, land subsidence, and levee failure doom today's Delta.
2. More fresh water is better for the Delta ecosystem.	Variability and fluctuation are important for a healthy ecosystem.
3. Delta users cannot adapt to change.	Delta users can adapt to change; they have no alternative.
4. Incremental changes will solve the Delta's problems.	Major policy changes are needed.
5. State and federal governments will pay to keep the Delta as it is.	Government funds are limited. Beneficiaries must pay; they will pay more if Delta fails
6. We don't know enough to make radical changes.	We can make reasonable choices, despite uncertainties.

Promising Alternatives Allow More Variable Delta Flows

1. New export conveyance alternatives

- Build conveyance around or through Delta
- Breaks link between exports and ecosystem flows

2. Reduced-exports alternatives

- Use Delta for conveyance, but only export when freshwater flows abundant
- Allows conditions to vary for ecosystem management

“No Regrets” Short-term Actions

- **Emergency preparedness**
- **“Do not resuscitate” list for some islands**
- **Delta land use**
 - **Flood control guidelines for urbanization**
 - **Habitat protection**
- **Suisun Marsh and Cache Slough projects for pelagic fish**

Aspects of a Long-term Solution

- Focus on promising alternatives
- Begin a Delta Solutions Program – problem-solving R&D
- Enhance regional and statewide representation in Delta land use decisions (e.g. SF BCDC)
- Require up-front funding commitments from beneficiaries
- Establish mitigation mechanisms – everyone will **not** “get better together”

Narrowing the Alternatives: Delta Solution Insights

- **Technical insights to inform Delta Vision, BDCP**
 - **Short time horizon (by late 2007, early 2008)**
- **Commission expert panel reports**
 - 1. Focused comparisons of promising alternatives**
 - 2. Institutional options for long-term Delta management and finance**
 - 3. Delta environmental management**
 - 4. Variability for the Bay-Delta system**

Delta Solutions Program: Medium-Term

- Needed follow-on to Delta Vision decisions
- Technical group to suggest promising solutions
- Multi-year effort; must start now
- Initial technical effort
 - Desirable ecological conditions
 - In-Delta solutions (islands, levees, habitat,...)
 - Export solutions (conveyance, screens,...)
 - Institutions (economics, finance, assurances)
 - System integration and operations

Questions?

- Full report, research brief, and other materials at:
www.ppic.org and watershed.ucdavis.edu

